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FOR

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM

The Today Show

WRC-TV STATION

NBC Network

DATE

March 24, 1983 7:00 A.M.

CITY

Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT

Jon Alpert Report on Nicaragua

JANE PAULEY: We've been following this week reports of fighting in Nicaragua. The reports have not been coming from journalists, because no journalists have been allowed at the scene of the fighting.

Free-lance journalist Jon Alpert was in Nicaragua recently to cover the fighting between the Sandinista government and the rebels there and found it's tough to get cooperation from the Nicaraguan government.

JON ALPERT: Yeah. We would have had the report sooner. But when the high-ups in the Nicaraguan government found out that we had taped their big battle, they took our tapes away. And it took us a little bit of time to get them back. And it's bad.

Three thousand counterrevolutionaries have come across from their base in Honduras and they're attacking towns all in the North, in the Northern border. And we hooked up with a detachment of government troops, Sandinistas, as they went out one night to chase after the counterrevolutionaries.

[Speaks in Spanish] How long do we have to march for?

[Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: One hour? Uh-huh.

[Speaks in Spanish] When are we going to attack? Tomorrow?

> MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: In the morning. Uh-huh.

Where's the enemy?

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: Up in that mountain over there. Uh-huh.

How many troops does the enemy have?

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: They have about 200. Uh-huh.

Why are we stopping? Ambush? Ambush? Have you been ambushed before? [Speaks in Spanish] Si?

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: They're looking to see if they can see the enemy. Uh-huh.

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: It doesn't look like they saw anything.

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: Coordinating the circle around them.

[Speaks in Spanish] Are we close to them?

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: We're going to go a little bit more.

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: We're going to that house over there.

They weren't here. No fighting today. Uh-huh.

[Speaks in Spanish] Where are we going to sleep? Right here? On the floor here? Uh-huh.

Manana? Manana? What's going to happen tomorrow?

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: You don't know.

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: Up there on the line? They're running away.

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: About five of them, maybe ten.

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: They're escaping. They're over there.

[Men speaking in Spanish]

MAN [on radio]: Go ahead.

ALPERT: Go ahead.

MAN [on radio]: Go ahead.

ALPERT: [Speaks in Spanish] He's speaking English.

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: Who is it?

MAN [on radio]: Ten-six. Three six hundred.

ALPERT: Three six hundred.

Ten. Who is it?

MAN: [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: An American?

MAN: Si.

ALPERT: With the counterrevolutionaries?

[Shouts and gunfire]

ALPERT: You guys lost one?

MAN: One. Si.

ALPERT: This is a counterrevolutionary?

MAN: Right.

ALPERT: You sure?

4

MAN: Si. [Speaks in Spanish]

ALPERT: Made in USA. All this stuff comes from the United States?

MAN: That's right.

ALPERT: And they come where, from Honduras?

MAN: From Honduras. Right.

ALPERT: How many years have you been fighting now?

MAN: Eight years.

ALPERT: Yeah? When's it going to be over? Huh?

MAN: We must ask Mr. Reagan for that answer.

PAULEY: It wasn't easy to get that tape back into the country, Jon. Thank you.